

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LENING 00243 261251Z

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SUBJECT: LENINGRADSKAYA AND TSENTRALNAYA PRAVADA HONOR VICTIM OF
1948 "LENINGRAD AFFAIR"

USIA FOR IEE

1. IN A RARE TRIBUTE, THESE DAYS, TO A MAJOR SACRIFICE TO THE
CULT OF PERSONALITY, FEBRUARY 19TH'S LEPRAVDA IN AN ARTICLE
ENTITLED "COMMUNIST AND SOLDIER" MARKED THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BIRTH OF A.A. KUZNETSOV, MAJOR BLOCKAGE-ERA PARTY
FIGURE, ZHDANOV'S SUCCESSOR AS LENINGRAD PARTY LEADER, AND
PRINCIPAL VICTIM, ALONG WITH VOZNESENSKIY, OF THE 1948 "LENINGRAD
AFFAIR." KUZNETSOV WAS POSTHUMOUSLY REHABILITATED DURING THE
KHRUSCHEV ERA, AND TEN YEARS AGO THE CENTRAL PRAVDA MARKED THE
60TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH WITH AN ARTICLE WHICH PROVIDED THE
FIRST OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF THE DATE OF HIS TRIAL AND
EXECUTION. THIS YEAR, THE CENTRAL PRAVDA MARKED THE 70TH
ANNIVERSARY ON FEBRUARY 20. AS IN THE LENINGRADSKAYA, IT
DEVOTED A HEFTY THIRD OF A PAGE TO ITS ENCOMIUM, WITH PHOTO,
ENTITLED "A TRUE SON OF THE PARTY."

2. BOTH ARTICLES RECALL THE YOUNG KUZNETSOV'S RISE TO POWER
THROUGH KOMSOMOL AND PARTY RANKS, THE LENINGRADSKAYA'S
UNDERLINING THAT "AT THE AGE OF TWENTY, HE BECAME A MEMBER OF
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PAGE 02 LENING 00243 261251Z

THE LENINIST PARTY, AND THROUGHOUT HIS WHOLE LIFE, TOOK TO HIS

HEART DEVOTION TO ITS IDEAS, GOALS, AND AFFAIRS." REVIEWING HIS WARTIME ACTIVITIES, WHICH AMOUNTED TO VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP IN FOOD-DISTRIBUTION AND DEFENSE-ORGANIZATION FOR LENINGRAD, KUZNETSOV IS REMEMBERED BY A WARTIME COLLEAGUE D.V. PAVLOV, AS HAVING ACCOMPLISHED THINGS THAT WERE "IN UNBELIEVABLE TIMES, UNFORGETTABLE." THE HOME-TOWN PAPER GOES ON TO QUOTE MARSHALL ZHUKOV'S POSITIVE MEMORIES OF THE WARTIME LENINGRAD TEAM -- ZHDANOV, KUZNETSOV, SHTYKOV AND SOLOV'EV -- INCLUDING, FOR THE UNENLIGHTENED, HIS NOTE THAT "ETIKH TOVARISHCHEY SEYCHAS UZHE NET V ZHIVYKH" ("THESE COMRADS ARE ALREADY DEAD.") THE ARTICLE CONTINUES, TRACING KUZNETSOV'S CAREER TO THE HEIGHTS ACHIEVED IN THE PERIOD 1946-49, WHEN HE SERVED AS A CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY AND MEMBER OF THE THEN ORGBYURO TSK, VKP (B) WHERE IT ABRUPTLY -- AS DID KUZNETSOV -- ENDS.

3. AS IS PERHAPS FITTING, THE CENTRAL PRAVDA'S TREATMENT IS MORE RESERVED, PORTRAYING A TOUGHER SPECIMEN, TYING THE ARTICLE DIRECTLY TO THE UPCOMING 30TH ANNIVERSARY, AND EVEN PRINTING A PICTURE THAT SHOWS A FATTER, OLDER AND LESS SOULFUL-LOOKING KUZNETSOV. KALININ IS CITED, RATHER THAN ZHUKOV, AND KUZNETSOV'S ORGBYURO POST OMITTED. ONLY THE PAST TENSE TELLS THE READER THAT KUZNETSOV ISN'T ON PENSION SOMEWHERE.

4. COMMENT: THE DIFFERENCES IN CONTENT AND TONE OF THE TWO PIECES INTERESTINGLY INDICATE THE DEAL OF LOCAL PRIDE THAT CHARACTERIZES LENINGRAD, BUT WHICH ALWAYS, HOWEVER, IS INTERACTING WITH FEAR OF THE POWER OF THE CAPITAL. ADDITIONALLY, IN THE FACE OF A GENERAL LINE WHICH PRESENTS THE QUESTION OF STALINIST EXCESSES AS HAVING BEEN ONCE AND FOR ALL DEALT WITH AND NOT TO BE NEEDESSLY DWELT UPON, THESE TWO ARTICLES POINT UP WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE A MINOR MEDIA ANNOYANCE FOR THE SOVIETS DURING THE PROCESS OF HEATING UP THE PUBLIC FOR THE UPCOMING 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "VICTORY OVER FASCISM," I.E., THE NUMBER OF VICTORS WHO BECAME, NOT LONG AFTER, VICTIMS, ESPECIALLY IN LENINGRAD. IN COMBINATION WITH THE FACT OF A FRAMED PICTURE OF STALIN SEEN DISPLAYED PROMINENTLY ON THE BOOKSHELVES OF A MID-RANGE CITY SOVIET OFFICIAL'S APARTMENT DURING A SOCIAL EVENT RECENTLY, IT CALLS TO MIND THE NUMBER OF OLD UNPAID SCORES HERE THAT THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY DRUM-BEATING WILL PROBABLY BE DREDGING UP, IF NOT SURFACING.

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PAGE 03 LENING 00243 261251Z

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